

Iraq, coalition forces have worked hard to make the port area secure, to make the transit of humanitarian aid as safe as possible. As—I was told this morning in my briefings that humanitarian aid should begin moving—massive amounts of humanitarian aid should begin moving within the next 36 hours. And that's going to be very positive news for a lot of people who have suffered a long time under Saddam Hussein.

We've got a massive ground assault going on, and right behind it will be a massive movement of humanitarian aid to help the people of Iraq. We have made that promise to the people of this country that we will do everything we can to protect innocent life. And we're doing that. And we'll do everything we can to help the Iraqi people. First thing, of course, that will help the Iraqi people is to rid them from a brutal dictator, somebody who has stayed in power through mutilation and rape and torture, somebody who has starved his own people so he could build palaces. When

free from that dictatorship, life will be a lot better.

But we also understand we have an obligation—and this is just not America; it's coalition forces—have an obligation to put food and medicine in places so the Iraqi people can live a normal life and have hope. And that's exactly what's going to happen shortly when the area is completely—safe enough to move the equipment forward.

Listen, thank you all.

#### *President's Stamina*

Q. How are you holding up, sir?

*The President.* I feel just fine. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House upon his return from Camp David, MD. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia March 25, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated. Well, good morning. Thanks for coming. I've just met with our leaders here at the Pentagon, who are monitoring the course of our battle to free Iraq and rid that country of weapons of mass destruction. Our coalition is on a steady advance. We're making good progress.

We're fighting an enemy that knows no rules of law, that will wear civilian uniforms, that is willing to kill in order to continue the reign of fear of Saddam Hussein. But we're fighting with bravery and courage.

We cannot know the duration of this war. Yet we know its outcome: We will prevail. The Iraqi regime will be disarmed. The

Iraqi regime will be ended. The Iraqi people will be free, and our world will be more secure and peaceful.

The people of our military and their families are showing great courage, and some have suffered great loss. America is grateful to all those who have sacrificed in our cause.

Our coalition is strong. It's bound together by the principle of protecting not only this Nation but all nations from a brutal regime that is armed with weapons that could kill thousands of innocent people. America has more than 200,000 men and women engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Our troops also continue to fight bravely in other fronts of this war on terror. In Afghanistan last week, coalition forces launched Operation Valiant Strike against terrorists and their allies in the southern mountains of Afghanistan. Of course, we have troops standing watch in other parts of the world to protect and maintain the peace. All the members of the military, abroad, at home, or here in this important building, are bound together by a great cause, to defend the American people and advance the universal hope of freedom.

America has accepted this responsibility. We also accept the cost of supporting our military and the missions we give it. Today I'm sending the Congress a wartime supplemental appropriations request of \$74.7 billion, to fund needs directly arising from the Iraqi conflict and our global war against terror.

My request to Congress will pay for the massive task of transporting a fully equipped military force, both active duty and reserve, to a region halfway around the world. This money will cover the current cost of fueling our ships and aircraft and tanks and of airlifting tons of supplies into the theater of operations. The supplemental will also allow us to replace the high-tech munitions we are now directing against Saddam Hussein's regime.

My request includes funds for relief and reconstruction in a free Iraq. This Nation and our coalition partners are committed to making sure that the Iraqi citizens who have suffered under a brutal tyrant have got the food and medicine needed as soon as possible.

Tommy Franks briefed us this morning about coalition efforts to demine the harbors—the harbor—to make sure that our humanitarian relief can be delivered safely to the Iraqi people. Coalition forces are working hard to make sure that when the food and medicine begins to move, it does so in a safe way. And soon, the Iraqi people will see the great compassion of not only the United States but other nations around

the world who care deeply about the human condition inside that country.

Our campaign in Iraq involves assistance of coalition partners and friends in the Middle East. The funding request to Congress will help reduce the economic burdens these countries have experienced in supporting our efforts. Also included are funds essential to waging and helping our partners wage the broader war on terror, which continues in Afghanistan, in the Philippines, and elsewhere.

We continue to fight the war on terror by protecting our homeland. At the Federal level, I'm requesting more resources for the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, to deal with this period of uncertainty. We'll provide resources for patrolling and safeguarding our borders, funds to help the FBI investigate domestic threats in this time of war, additional funding for the Coast Guard for port security in the United States and in the Middle East.

In this time of heightened security, we are expecting States and communities to take on greater responsibilities to protect critical infrastructure. And so I'm seeking additional resources to help States and cities make these preparations for the protection of our citizens.

Yesterday I informed the leaders of Congress of these spending requests. The situation in any war is fluid. I reminded them of that fact, and so I'm asking Congress for flexibility in how these funds can be allocated. They heard that message. They also heard the message that the need is urgent. The wartime supplemental is directly related to winning this war and to securing the peace that will follow this war. I ask Congress to act quickly and responsibly.

One thing is for certain: Business as usual on Capitol Hill can't go on during this time of war. And by that I mean the supplemental should not be viewed as an opportunity to add spending that is unrelated, unwise, and unnecessary. Every dollar we spend must serve the interest of

our Nation, and the interest of our Nation in this supplemental is to win this war and to be able to keep the peace.

Eighteen months ago, this building came under attack. From that day to this, we have been engaged in a new kind of war, and we are winning. We will not leave our future to be decided by terrorist groups or terrorist regimes. At every turn in this conflict, Americans can be confident in the people who wear our Nation's uniform. We support them. We are thankful for their service in places of great danger, in this hour of great need.

May God continue to look out after those who defend the peace and freedom. And may God continue to bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Eisenhower Dining Room. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Military and Humanitarian Operations in Iraq and To Ensure Domestic Safety

March 25, 2003

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

On October 16, 2002, I signed into law the "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002" (Public Law 107-243). After condemning Saddam Hussein's continued possession of chemical and biological weapons, obstruction of inspections, and brutal repression of the Iraqi people, the Congress affirmed, "Iraq poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States and international peace and security of the Persian Gulf region and remains in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations."

Subsequent to enactment of Public Law 107-243, the United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed to Resolution 1441 offering Iraq one final chance to disarm. After more than a decade of deceit and defiance, the regime, yet again, failed to "fully and unconditionally" comply. Iraq continues to pose a grave danger to global peace and security. The United States and our allies must seek to disarm Iraq and

liberate the Iraqi people, and we will prevail.

Today, I submit a request for 2003 supplemental appropriations to support Department of Defense operations in Iraq and to strengthen the capabilities of our friends and allies who will share the burden of military and stabilization activities. Disarming and liberating Iraq is a first step. This request also provides immediate humanitarian relief, support for reconstruction, and the development of a free-market democracy in Iraq. Finally, the request will enhance the safety and well-being of Americans at home and abroad with investments managed by the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies.

This request reflects urgent and essential requirements. Much of the funding has been requested with flexible authorities. This flexibility will ensure requirements can be immediately addressed as they arise despite the unpredictable scope, duration, and intensity of operations. I ask the Congress to appropriate the funds as requested, and